

# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

## Communicable Disease Control

## HIB Disease

### (Hemophilus Influenza Type B Disease including Hemophilus Meningitis)

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#### What is Hemophilus Influenza Type B (Hib) Disease?

Hib is one of the most important causes of serious bacterial infections in young children. Hib may cause diseases such as meningitis (inflammation of the covering of the spinal column and brain), blood stream infections and infections of other sterile parts of the body. Of the diseases that are preventable by vaccine, Hib is the leading cause of death to infants in Montana.

#### Who gets Hib disease?

Hib disease is most common in children three months to three years of age, although the bacteria can be carried by persons of any age.

#### How is Hib disease spread?

Hib disease may be transmitted through contact with mucous or droplets (coughing or sneezing) from the nose and throat of an infected person.

#### What are the symptoms and possible complications of Hib disease?

Early symptoms may include fever, nausea and vomiting, other symptoms depend upon the part of the body affected. If the disease progresses to meningitis, symptoms could include a stiff neck and back and may then progress to a stupor or coma. When Hib meningitis occurs, a certain proportion of those who do recover may have long-lasting neurologic problems. Cases may be fatal.

#### How soon do symptoms appear?

The incubation period for Hib disease is probably 2-4 days, which is when the early symptoms of the disease would appear.

#### When and for how long is a person able to spread Hib disease?

The contagious period varies, and unless treated, may persist for as long as the organism is still present in the nose and throat, even after symptoms have disappeared. If the person is treated with an effective antibiotic they will probably be non-infectious within 24-48 hours after starting the treatment.

#### Does past infection with Hib disease make a person immune?

No. Children who have had Hib disease are at risk of getting the disease again.

#### What is the treatment for Hib disease?

Antibiotics are used to treat serious infections. Rifampin is used to treat people who may be carrying the germ, especially all who live in the house with a child that has Hib disease and all who are in a day care (including the staff) where Hib disease is suspected.

#### Is there a vaccine for Hib disease?

Yes. The Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommend that Hib conjugate vaccine be given to all children.

#### How can Hib disease be prevented?

The single most effective control measure is having children immunized properly against Hib disease and to maintain the highest possible immunization levels in the community. Other methods of control include early diagnosis and reporting of cases and prompt treatment of persons closely associated with cases. Parents should maintain an Immunization Record Card that documents when their children received the vaccine against Hib disease. To receive an immunization card, contact your health care provider.